

We claim:

1. A method of charging a vertical tube (1) having an internal diameter of 50 mm or less with catalyst particles (2), which comprises
 - 5 - introducing a filling aid (3) into the vertical tube (1), where the filling aid comprises a flexible elongated body and the ratio of the cross section of the flexible elongated body to the cross section of the tube (1) is from 0.003 to 0.08, and
 - introducing the catalyst particles (2) into the tube (1).
- 10 2. A method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the flexible elongated body has an essentially circular cross section.
3. A method as claimed in claim 2, wherein the ratio of the diameter of the flexible elongated body to the diameter of the tube (1) is from 0.005 to 0.07.
- 15 4. A method as claimed in any of the preceding claims, wherein the flexible elongated body consists of a textile string or a textile tape.
- 20 5. A method as claimed in any of the preceding claims, wherein the filling aid (3) has a rigid terminating element (4) whose density is greater than that of the flexible body.
- 25 6. A method as claimed in any of the preceding claims, wherein the filling aid (3) has spacers (5) which are arranged at a distance from one another and extend perpendicular to the longitudinal direction of the filling aid (3).
7. A method as claimed in any of the preceding claims, wherein the filling aid (3) is withdrawn during introduction of the catalyst particles (2) so that the lower end of the filling aid is always above the fill height of the catalyst particles (2) in the tube (1).
- 30 8. A method as claimed in claim 7, which comprises successively
 - introducing the filling aid (3) into the tube (1) in such a way that the lower end of the filling aid (3) is located at a first height,
 - 35 - introducing catalyst particles (2) into the tube (1) to below the first height,
 - if desired, partly withdrawing the filling aid (3) from the tube (1) so that the lower end of the filling aid (3) is located at a second or further height and introducing catalyst particles (2) into the tube (1) to below the second or further height,

- withdrawing the filling aid (3) completely from the tube (1) and filling the tube (1) with catalyst particles up to the final fill height.

9. A method as claimed in any of the preceding claims, wherein the catalyst
5 particles comprise shaped bodies composed of a catalytically active composition.

10. A method as claimed in any of claims 1 to 8, wherein the catalyst particles
comprise a catalytic composition applied in the form of a shell to an inert support.